

STUDIO 60 ON THE SUNSET STRIP

"The West Coast Delay"

Written by Mark Goffman

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 INT. WRITERS' ROOM - NIGHT

1

The WRITERS, led by RICKY and RON, are seated around the conference table--though a couple are sitting on the floor and leaning against the wall from fatigue.

RICKY

90 seconds. That's what he's asked for.
90 seconds of material from the writers' room. Was the request patronizing and a veiled insult? I think so.

RON

I don't think the insult was that veiled.

RICKY

Me neither. But not being able to contribute 90 seconds to a 90 minute telecast is a good way to demonstrate that we're people who should be insulted.

RON

Yeah.

RICKY

What.

RON

It is.

RICKY lifts the end of the table up and bangs it down, getting everyone's attention.

RICKY

We have to produce something!

LUCY

May I ask if I can re--

RICKY

No.

LUCY

If I can re-pitch--

RICKY

No.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED:

1

LUCY

A sketch about McDeere.

RICKY

No.

RON

I agree.

DENNY

The DUI, the Christian Right, the joke about cocaine, the book, the marriage, the sex clubs--

LUCY

To say nothing of hiring back Matt and Danny--

ELLIOT

Everybody is doing it and we look ridiculous if we don't.

FRED

Jay, Conan, Dave. SNL did it 24 hours after we did nothing.

RICKY

If we're gonna do a sketch calling the president of this network a drunken sex addict, I'm not gonna be the one to write it. What else?

DEB

It's self-deprecating.

RON

Self-deprecating would be if we were drunken sex addicts.

RICKY

What else?

HAL

I've got something.

RICKY

What?

HAL

I think I've got something.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED: (2)

1

HAL, a young writer on the staff, has been typing at his laptop until now.

RICKY

Hal, do you feel like this is the right time to pitch me something that blows?

HAL

No.

RICKY

So you're willing to take that chance?

RON

Lemme see it.

HAL sends his laptop down to RICKY and RON.

HAL

It's for Simon. Either as a sketch or he can do it as an editorial in News 60.

RICKY

(reading)

"At schools today all the kids are diagnosed with stuff like dyslexia, hyperlexia, ADD, ADHD... In my day you were just stupid. "What's wrong with my son?" "Oh, him? He's stupid. Next!"

The room laughs a little...RICKY smiles...

RICKY (CONT'D)

(pause)

"America's the most overweight nation in the world. We've got so much food here, we drop it on people along with bombs. If you really want to mess with somebody's head, drop a cruise missile and a couple a tons of Hot Pockets on their ass."

(to the room)

This is it, let's everybody get to work on this.

CUT TO:

2 INT. THEATRE BALCONY - NIGHT

2

MATT's sitting in a seat with a legal pad and his feet up on the rail. He's staring at the empty stage below.

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED:

2

There's a KNOCK on his office door--

MATT
(calling back)
Yeah.

HARRIET opens the door. She's got a baseball bat and she's stuck a little bow on the end.

HARRIET
Matthew?

MATT
Out here.

HARRIET
Are you busy?

MATT
I'm choking.

HARRIET
You want me to come back?

MATT
No. What do you need?

HARRIET
Listen.

MATT
Yeah.

HARRIET
I want to move on.

MATT gets up and goes into--

3 INT. MATT'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

3

MATT
What do you mean?

HARRIET
I want closure, Matthew, and I want to move on.

MATT
Are you talking about us?

HARRIET
No one has to hit you over the head.

(CONTINUED)

MATT

We broke up.

HARRIET

Yeah.

MATT

How much more closure are you looking for?

HARRIET

I want you to tell me that you have no intention of trying to win me back.

MATT

Well we have a problem there.

HARRIET

Yes I know. You're a northeastern Jewish liberal atheist and I'm a Southern Baptist who believes that you're going to burn in hell.

MATT

(beat)

Two problems.

HARRIET

You're my boss.

MATT

Yeah.

HARRIET

And you think that's an insurmountable obstacle.

MATT

What's gonna happen when I give you a note you don't like? Or give Jeannie a sketch you want? Or give you a sketch you shouldn't have gotten?

HARRIET

I know. I didn't come up here to convince you otherwise. I just wanted to hear it. So. We have closure.

MATT

Yes.

(CONTINUED)

HARRIET
We are closed.

MATT
You feel alright about it?

HARRIET
I'd feel better if you appeared even a little ambivalent.

MATT
I'm extremely ambivalent. What I'm exhibiting are leadership skills.

HARRIET
Well done.

MATT
Is that for me?

HARRIET
It is. I wanted to give you a non-romantic present. You did two great shows in a row.

MATT
Well it doesn't get a lot less romantic than a baseball bat.

HARRIET
It's signed by Darren Wells.

MATT
(reading)
"You're a big hit. Darren Wells." How'd you get this?

HARRIET
You really want to know?

MATT
Yeah.

HARRIET
Ironically, I got it when I sang the National Anthem at the Dodgers game.

MATT
You asked him for it?

HARRIET
He gave it to me.

(CONTINUED)

MATT

When?

HARRIET

After I sang.

MATT

(beat)

Okay, wait. He gave this to you.

HARRIET

He did, and I'm giving it to you.

MATT

"You're a big hit", he was talking about you.

HARRIET

He liked the way I sang. I'm giving it to you because I like the way you write.

MATT

Yeah, but I think we're skipping over a part.

HARRIET

I'm passing it on.

MATT's looking at the bat--

MATT

Harry?

HARRIET

Yeah.

MATT

He wrote his phone number on here.

HARRIET

What do you mean?

MATT

I mean he wrote his phone number on here, you didn't see it?

HARRIET

That's his phone number?

MATT

What did you think it was?

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED: (4)

3

HARRIET

I just thought it was the number from his uniform. You know, they sign their name and then write their number.

MATT

Yeah, they do do that. You thought his uniform number was three-billion, one-hundred and six million, two-hundred and thirty-four thousand, five-hundred and-- *he was asking you out!*

HARRIET

You know now that I've had time to reflect upon it I think you might be right.

MATT

Do you?

HARRIET

Yes.

MATT

Yeah, you gave me a used cocktail napkin basically. Do you think I don't know that men are interested in you?

HARRIET

Whoa wait, I didn't give it to you on purpose.

MATT

You put a ribbon on it, knocked on my door and handed it to me.

HARRIET

I meant I wasn't trying to make you jealous.

MATT

Has he asked you out?

HARRIET

(beat)
Hm?

MATT

Has he asked you out?

HARRIET

No.

(CONTINUED)

MATT

Okay--

HARRIET

Yes, he has. We've had dinner and he's coming to the show Friday. I lied for a second and then I realized I couldn't.

MATT

'Cause you're a good Christian girl.

HARRIET

No, 'cause I'd get caught, I always do. I didn't give you the bat to zatz you, it was an honest--

MATT

I like how he signs a bat instead of a ball. Like he's a slugger. He's a pitcher. You know what his job is when he comes to the plate? To stick his bat out and hope for the off-chance that the ball will accidentally hit it on its way to the catcher's mitt.

HARRIET

It was an honest mistake.

MATT

Really?

HARRIET

You can accuse me of being dumb but not sinister.

MATT

How 'bout manipulative, can I accuse you of that?

HARRIET

Look, Skipper, if I wanted to make you jealous, trust me, you'd be jealous.

MATT

I AM JEALOUS!

HARRIET

Well then bonus for me!

There's a KNOCK--

(CONTINUED)

MATT

Yeah.

RICKY and RON come in with some pages. They're excited.

RICKY

Matt. We got something. It's good. It's
for Simon, a News 60 segment.

RON

90 seconds.

There's a short awkward moment before RICKY hands MATT the pages.

HARRIET

(to MATT)

Are we done?

MATT

I'm certain we're not.

HARRIET

Yeah.

HARRIET exits.

MATT starts reading. After a moment...

MATT

This is funny.

SMASH CUT TO:

MAIN TITLES

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

4 INT. NBS EXECUTIVE DINING ROOM - NIGHT

4

JORDAN is having dinner with MARTHA (MARTY) O'DELL, a knockout with the figure of a 1940's movie star. She's smart and disarmingly droll.

MARTHA

Your executive dining room is open for dinner?

JORDAN

I figure if I'm gonna make people work late. Plus it's actually cost efficient when you look at the expense sheets turned in by--it doesn't matter. He's self-publishing it on the Internet. There'll be some mortifying things.

MARTHA

More than the drunk driving and the sex clubs?

JORDAN

He'll make stuff up.

MARTHA

Why?

JORDAN

There's a good living in it.

MARTHA

What's an NBS Burger?

JORDAN

It's a hamburger.

MARTHA

How is it prepared?

JORDAN

Here in the kitchen of the dining room at NBS.

MARTHA

Gotchya.

KEVIN has come in with a couple of papers for JORDAN to sign.

(CONTINUED)

JORDAN

Thanks. This is my assistant, Kevin Yu.
Kevin, this is Martha O'Dell.

KEVIN

I read you every week.

MARTHA

Thank you.

KEVIN

I spoke with Danny Tripp's office and you
guys can come by in the morning anytime.

JORDAN

Great.

KEVIN leaves with the signed papers.

JORDAN (CONT'D)

What would possess me to marry him do you
suppose? And did I not have a friend who
would tackle me to the ground on my way
down the aisle?

MARTHA

I don't know, but if we're gonna talk
about it then we're going on the record.

JORDAN

We're not going on the record, this isn't
about me.

MARTHA

Then I have to ask you.

JORDAN

What?

MARTHA

What's the NBS Salad?

JORDAN

Some of these are pretty intuitive,
Marty.

MARTHA

I'm not as smart as people think I am.

JORDAN

Now she tells us.

(CONTINUED)

MARTHA

It *is* about you. You flipped off half the country and the TV business on your first day of work.

JORDAN

I wasn't flipping anybody off.

MARTHA

You can be a woman, look like you do and have the power you do but not all at the same time.

JORDAN

You manage it, and you take on the right twice a week in print.

MARTHA

I take on the left too and I don't manage it, I just don't care about it. Google me, you'll find a lot worse than a DUI in Sag Harbor.

JORDAN

I know.

MARTHA

Trust me, it's like seasickness. You think you're gonna die and everyone else just thinks it's funny.

JORDAN

I do trust you.

MARTHA

And you'll have to go on the record eventually.

JORDAN

Eventually.

MARTHA

So is that my answer?

JORDAN

Shelly thinks it's a good idea, I think it's a good idea, but Matt and Danny are gonna have to think it's a good idea. We're gonna go see them.

MARTHA

What should I know?

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED: (3)

4

JORDAN

These are two thoroughly decent guys who
have good reason to fear the press.

MARTHA

What's the best way to make a first
impression?

JORDAN

Just--

JORDAN indicates that MARTHA should unbutton the next button
on her top--

JORDAN (CONT'D)

--yeah.

MARTHA

(doing it)
Easy as pie.

JORDAN

I figured.

CUT TO:

5 INT. HARRIET'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

5

SIMON, TOM, JEANNIE and SAMANTHA are working on News 60 jokes.

SIMON

(reading what he's written)
America's gulf coast is gearing up for
another hurricane season. This year's
storms threaten to be worse than last
year when tens of thousands of African
American families were forced to flee
their homes.

HARRIET comes in--

HARRIET

You guys should feel free to use my
dressing room anytime you want.

TOM

Thanks.

(CONTINUED)

SIMON

"A spokesman for the Army Corps of Engineers has guaranteed that the new levees will be ready in time to protect new building projects from surges of water and black people."

SAMANTHA

It's taking a little long to get there.

JEANNIE

It is.

SIMON

(to JEANNIE)

See that, that was piling on. She was right, I knew it, you knew I knew it, and you went in for the late hit.

SAMANTHA

Did you give him the bat?

HARRIET

Yes.

SAMANTHA

Did he like it?

HARRIET

I'm not sure, it was hard to tell from the way he was shoving it up my ass. I didn't know that Darren had written his phone number on the bat.

SAMANTHA

He knows that you went out with him?

HARRIET

Dinner. And he's coming to the show. Which is not the same as him sleeping with someone who I work with every day and night.

JEANNIE

You know I'm sitting right here, right?

SIMON

"America's Gulf Coast is gearing up for another hurricane season."

(CONTINUED)

HARRIET

For which his defense was "We broke up, I'm allowed to date people" so I'm curious to find out exactly how that rule is only applied unilaterally.

SIMON

"This year's storms threaten to be worse than last year's--"

HARRIET

Of course, we'll never know because he only has conversations when he gets to write what everybody else says too. You know what I think? I think this. Let me just say this:

SIMON

(to HARRIET)

You think it's taking me a long time to get there?

The door opens and MATT, RICKY and RON appear--

MATT

Simon--

HARRIET

And by all means, come in without knocking.

MATT

Yeah.

(handing SIMON pages)

Look at this. We'll do it as an editorial.

HARRIET

You know maybe the reason Darren Wells and I get along so well is that he likes to both talk and listen.

MATT

Or maybe the reason you get along so well is because you both have roughly the same chance of getting a hit in a Major League baseball game.

HARRIET

I loathe you.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED: (3)

5

MATT
(to SIMON)
What do you think?

SIMON
(meaning he likes it)
This is alright. I mean, I've got some of
my own stuff I can--

MATT
Yeah, do this. It's from Ricky and Ron.

RICKY
It was the room.

SIMON
Okay.

MATT
I've still got twelve and a half minutes
left to write, I'll be in my office.

RICKY and RON tap fists as MATT exits out into--

6 INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

6

--with TOM following him out and falling in step.

TOM
Matt.

MATT
Yeah.

TOM
You need me to help?

MATT
I think I'm gonna be alright. I'm trying
to get something going on "Meet the Press
with Juliette Lewis" but I'm not getting
any traction on it yet.

They start heading upstairs on--

7 INT. STAIRWAY - CONTINUOUS

7

TOM
Yeah, actually I meant with Harriet.

MATT
What are you talking about?

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED:

7

TOM

This is exactly what happened with Paula
and me when we broke up.

MATT

What is?

TOM

She just gave you a brush-back pitch,
okay, she just gave you a little chin
music.

MATT

She says she didn't do it on purpose.

TOM

You believe her?

MATT

No.

TOM

A purpose pitch, Matt, she threw at your
head.

They continue out onto--

8 INT. STAGE - CONTINUOUS

8

MATT

Are you using a baseball metaphor 'cause
it's Darren Wells?

TOM

No, but it's a nice coincidence.

MATT

Yeah.

TOM

This is exactly what happened with Paula.

MATT

She started dating a baseball player?

TOM

A cardiologist, like *that's* hard to be.

MATT

Yeah.

They start heading up--

9 INT. STAIRWAY - CONTINUOUS

9

TOM

She doesn't like the guy, she's just moving you off the plate. Now you feel crazy, the way she feels, the way she wants you to feel.

MATT

I don't feel crazy.

TOM

He's a professional athlete, Matt, he's physically superior to you in every possible way.

MATT

I feel a little crazy.

TOM

That's right, and that's why you're having trouble writing the last 12 minutes.

They walk out onto--

10 INT. UPSTAIRS CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

10

MATT

Strictly speaking I've never needed a special reason to have trouble writing, but what's your point?

TOM

This is pure Strindberg.

MATT

August Strindberg?

TOM

This is right out of *The Father*. Scariest play I've ever read.

They walk into--

11 INT. MATT'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

11

MATT

How did we move from baseball to August Strindberg?

(CONTINUED)

TOM

We just did. The wife drives the husband crazy, Matt, he literally goes mad because he's never able to regain the upper hand.

MATT

He goes mad because the wife plants it in his head that their child might not be his.

TOM

Exactly.

MATT

What the hell are you talking about?

TOM

Pick yourself up off the ground, don't brush the dirt off your uniform, stand in and blast the next pitch back into Paula's face.

MATT

Harriet's face.

TOM

Yes.

MATT

Why don't you just call her?

TOM

He goes *mad* at the end of the play, it's a very disturbing sight. I'd like to be your wingman.

MATT

Well I appreciate that, but I'm not flying anywhere, so--

TOM

You need a wingman and you've always been mine.

MATT

I have?

TOM

You could start.

MATT

Okay, call Paula.

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED: (2)

11

TOM

This isn't about me.

MATT

It really is.

TOM

You'd talk to Danny except Danny already thinks that you and Harry are a problem for the show.

MATT

(beat)

This is true.

TOM

So I'll just say this. The Pussycat Dolls are at the Roxy through Sunday. Two shows a night.

MATT

What do you want me to give her an autographed stiletto boot with the phone number of a Pussycat Doll?

TOM

Now we're on the same page.

MATT

Why don't you go get some sleep?

TOM

Do you need a copy of my *Collected Works of Strindberg*?

MATT

I've got my own. Seriously, why don't you get some sleep?

TOM

Yeah, I'm gonna crash in my dressing room.

MATT

You could go home, you know.

TOM

Nah, lemme know if you need help with *Meet the Press*.

MATT

Thanks.

(calling)

Maisy!

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED: (3)

11

TOM exits as MAISY comes in the side door--

MAISY

Yeah.

MATT

(pause)

Did I just call you?

MAISY

Yeah.

MATT

(pause)

I don't know why.

MAISY

You want some coffee or something to eat?

MATT

No thanks.

MAISY

Okay.

MATT

You know anything about the baseball player Harriet's been seeing?

MAISY

I know I got him tickets for the show tomorrow night.

MATT

Why would you do that?

MAISY

It's one of my jobs.

MATT

Now I have to punish you.

MAISY

They just met. He's just a rebound guy. Don't let it make you nuts.

MATT

(pause)

Yeah. Too late. Would you call over to the stage door at the Roxy and tell the doorman I'm coming by to see Wendy. I'll be back in a half hour.

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED: (4)

11

MAISY

Are you gonna do something stupid?

MATT

It would certainly appear that way.

MATT exits.

CUT TO:

12 EXT./EST. THE ROXY - NIGHT

12

The marquee tells us that The Bombshell Babies are indeed performing two shows a night as we HEAR their encore and we

CUT TO:

13 INT. ROXY/BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

13

MATT is watching The BOMBSHELL BABIES perform their encore from the wings. The BABIES are wearing thigh-high leather stiletto boots.

They end the number to WILD CHEERS as they bow, wave and come offstage. During the entire scene the audience will be clapping in rhythm and stomping their feet, begging for an encore.

The BABIES all know MATT--

BABE #1

Matt!

BABE #2

Hey Matty!

MATT

Hey. Guys. That was great.

(calling)

Wendy.

WENDY

I see you.

MATT

I just need you for a second and I'll be outa your way.

WENDY

I never wanted you outa my way, remember?

(CONTINUED)

MATT
I do.

BABE #3
Matty.

MATT
Hey.

BABE #3
Your first two shows have been great. You
and Danny are the talk of the town.

MATT
Thanks, I appreciate that.

BABE #3
You like the wardrobe?

MATT
I listen to you guys for the articles.

WENDY comes over--

WENDY
What do you need?

MATT
(to BABE #3)
Excuse me.
(to WENDY)
I need a favor.

WENDY
What's the favor?

MATT
I'd like one of your boots.

WENDY
I'm sorry?

MATT
I'd like one of your boots.

WENDY
My boots.

(CONTINUED)

MATT

That you're wearing right now. And I need you to sign the inside of it, "Call me, baby" with the comma after "me" and then I need you to add your measurements.

WENDY

Sure.

WENDY sits and begins taking her boot off--

MATT

(pause)

You don't want to know why?

WENDY

Ah, I just did two shows, Matty, you really want a therapy session right now?

MATT

No.

WENDY

Good.

MATT

Here, you can use this pen.

WENDY'S pulled her boot off--

MATT (CONT'D)

It's just a joke. Harry gave me a bat that was signed to her by Darren Wells.

WENDY

The pitcher?

MATT

Yeah.

WENDY

He's hot.

MATT

Yeah thanks for the therapy.

WENDY

Was he hitting on her?

(CONTINUED)

MATT

He wrote his number on the bat. Harry says she thought it was his uniform number.

WENDY

Maybe she did.

MATT

12, 22, 7, these are the usual kinds of numbers you see on athletes. They don't typically run to ten digits.

WENDY

And you're using me to make her jealous?

MATT

Yeah, does that bother you?

WENDY

No, you know what bothers me?

MATT

What?

WENDY

That this is lame.

MATT

No, the beauty is the comma after "Call me". See, "Oh I thought it was 'Call me Baby', like that's the nickname she wanted me to call her" when it's really, "Call me, Baby".

WENDY

Matt--

MATT

Holy God this is lame, what in hell is happening to me?!

WENDY

Yeah, this is what I'm talking about. Listen to me, just grab her and stamp her down.

MATT

I can't stamp her down.

WENDY

Kiss her. Grab her and kiss her.

(CONTINUED)

MATT

I knew what it meant, I can't do it.

WENDY

Yes you can.

MATT

I can't, Wendy, I'm the guardian of the employment of about 150 people. And there are also issues having to do with her being insane.

WENDY

Well you would know about sanity 'cause you're the one here at midnight on a Thursday getting a used boot signed.

MATT

You know I'm not sure you got where I was going with the comma.

WENDY

I got it.

MATT

So this is lame, right?

WENDY

Yes.

MATT

Okay.

WENDY

Okay.

MATT

You looked great out there tonight.

WENDY

Thanks.

MATT

I'm gonna go back and write some more.

WENDY

I know.

BABE #4

I need her.

(to WENDY)

Let's go. One more.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED: (5)

13

MATT

You should take the boot.

WENDY

Again, thank you.

MATT exits.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

14 EXT./EST. STUDIO 60 - DAY

14

CUT TO:

14A INT. DRESSING ROOM AREA - DAY

14A

MATT steps into TOM's dressing room doorway. TOM's asleep on his couch. MATT grabs a nearby basketball and whips it against the wall just over TOM's head.

TOM

I'm up.

MATT

Do you know what you had me doing last night?

TOM

Hang on 'cause--did a basketball just come flying by my--

MATT

I've never felt so stupid in my life.

TOM

Did you get the boot?

MATT

No, I gave back the boot. Along with most of my dignity.

TOM

I gave up on dignity once Paula broke up with me.

MATT

Kinda wish you'd put it in that context when you advised me to get a boot signed.

MATT heads out and TOM follows--

TOM

Hey wait.

MATT

What.

TOM

Seriously. Is this hard?

(CONTINUED)

14A CONTINUED:

14A

MATT

When she's performing. If I subscribed to this kind of thing I'd say God was messing with me. She believes the universe was created in six days and that's not even among the top three reasons we're not together. How much evidence do you need that two people are wrong for each other? Except when I watch her onstage.

TOM

Your chest hurts?

MATT

Yeah.

TOM

(pause)
God.

MATT

What.

TOM

I just think it's great when we talk like this.

MATT

Yeah but we're done now.

TOM

Yeah.

MATT finished going up the stairs and walks out onto--

14B INT. STAGE - CONTINUOUS

14B

--where HARRIET's on the "Meet the Press" set. MATT watches her for a moment.

CAL

Harry, are you gonna have time after "Meet the Press" to get out and in for "News 60"?

HARRIET

What is it, two-twenty?

CAL

Yeah.

(CONTINUED)

HARRIET

I can make the change with 30 seconds to spare.

CAL

Really?

HARRIET

Unless you want me wearing clothes.

CAL

Well I don't. Take it from where you were.

HARRIET

(as JULIETTE LEWIS)

Hi. I'm Juliette Lewis and this is Meet the Press. Senator Clinton, that's an awesome color on you.

MATT heads out and we

CUT TO:

15 INT. DANNY'S OFFICE - DAY

15

DANNY's got the morning papers at his desk as MAISY steps in--

MAISY

Danny.

DANNY

Yeah.

MAISY

Jordan's here.

DANNY

Thank you.

MAISY steps out and JORDAN steps in...

JORDAN

Hello.

DANNY

Hi. You don't look very good.

JORDAN

Oh, that's nice of you, but don't say it unless you mean it.

(CONTINUED)

DANNY

You look tired.

JORDAN

I haven't been sleeping.

DANNY

What could possibly be keeping you up?

JORDAN

Listen, here's why I'm here. Martha O'Dell is waiting outside.

DANNY

Outside what?

JORDAN

Outside this office right now.

DANNY

Why?

JORDAN

Vanity Fair's asked her to write a cover story on the show and the regime change. Shelly wants it and so do I.

DANNY

Good, 'cause all we've been missing here the last few weeks is a reporter walking around the halls.

JORDAN

She's not just any reporter.

DANNY

Things happen around here. People blowing smoke out their office windows at night.

JORDAN

Tell me nobody's getting high in this building, Danny.

DANNY

You're shocked that drugs are a part of late-night comedy? *The Coneheads*? *Toonies* the *Driving Cat*? You think Belushi and Farley died from Lou Gehrig's Disease?

JORDAN

Tell me it's not happening here.

(CONTINUED)

DANNY

It's not happening here.

JORDAN

One night's sleep I'd like to get.

DANNY

What's your pitch?

JORDAN

It'll be for August, the ultimate beach reading issue. 4.8 million readers, most of them known to marketers as "Alpha Consumers." Alpha Consumers are the first to know, the first to try and the first to buy. They are influencers and pleasure seekers. The typical VF reader is college-educated and lives in a household with a six-figure income.

DANNY

Are you getting this off a crib sheet?

JORDAN

(showing him)

Yes.

DANNY

Jordan--

JORDAN

You can lose five regular consumers, replace 'em with one Alpha Consumer and I can charge the same ad rates, you understand what I'm saying?

DANNY

Bring her in.

JORDAN

You're gonna like her. I've known her a long time and she's really very--

(calling)

--Marty?

DANNY

Very what?

MARTHA's entered. She's dressed as JORDAN suggested.

JORDAN

Danny Tripp, this is Martha O'Dell.

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED: (3)

15

DANNY

It's great to meet you, I'm a big fan.

MARTHA

So am I. I loved the two movies and the shows so far have been very sharp.

DANNY

Thank you. Listen, why don't we go down the hall, 'cause Matt's gonna have to sign off on this too.

JORDAN

Sure.

They head down--

16 INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

16

DANNY

I understand you're gonna deliver us influencers and pleasure seekers.

MARTHA

Yeah.

DANNY

Is that what a Pulitzer Prize gets you?

MARTHA

I have two.

DANNY

You want full access?

MARTHA

Nothing less.

DANNY knocks on MATT's door--

DANNY

Matt!

MATT (OS)

Yeah.

DANNY

(to MARTHA)

Nice rack, by the way. Tell Jordan I'm not 15.

They walk into--

17 INT. MATT'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

17

DANNY

Matt, say hello to Martha O'Dell.

MATT turns around. Between the Pulitzers and the cleavage she's got his attention.

MATT

(beat)

Hi.

JORDAN

(to DANNY)

See, Matt, on the other hand--

DANNY

Yeah.

MATT

I'm Matt Albie.

MARTHA

I know, it's nice to meet you.

DANNY

Martha wants to do a long-lead cover for *Vanity Fair*.

MARTHA

I've gotta keep filing my columns from D.C. But I'd be out here every few weeks for a few days at a time.

DANNY

Full access, are you okay with that?

MATT

Uhhh...

DANNY, standing behind JORDAN and MARTHA, nods to MATT that he should do this one for him and say 'yes'.

MATT (CONT'D)

...sure.

DANNY

Good. When do you want to start?

MARTHA

I did five minutes ago.

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED:

17

DANNY

Gimme a second and I'll show you around.

MARTHA

Great. It's gonna be fun.

MATT

Yeah.

JORDAN

Thank you. Have a good show tonight.

MATT

Thanks.

JORDAN and MARTHA exit.

DANNY

Listen--

MATT

Really?

DANNY

Yeah, 'cause one of her readers is worth five of our viewers.

MATT

Well that would give her a perceived air of superiority.

DANNY

No, it's an actual air of superiority. We need her more than she needs us.

MATT

And I know how you love being in that position.

DANNY

Yeah, but I'll cowboy up. You want to go get breakfast?

MATT

Nah, I'm gonna stay and work.

DANNY

Is that a new bat?

MATT

Yeah. Yeah. Harry gave that to me.

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED: (2)

17

DANNY

She gave you a bat?

MATT's picked it up and casually holds it on his shoulder.

MATT

Yeah, it's signed by Darren Wells.

DANNY

A pitcher signed a bat?

MATT

It's better than a ball. It's a bat.

DANNY

Anything on your mind?

MATT

No.

DANNY

You sure you don't want to come to breakfast?

MATT

I've still got 2:20 to fill.

DANNY

Maybe by the time we get back from breakfast something funny will have happened.

MATT

I don't write the news, I can't wait for something funny to happen. I have to *make* something funny happen.

And with that, MATT, with the bat still resting on his shoulder, sits down onto his couch, the fat end of bat crashing through the glass window behind.

DANNY

(pause)

Well you're the best.

CUT TO:

18 EXT./EST. STUDIO 60 - NIGHT

18

The line of TICKET HOLDERS are being led inside single file as we HEAR the HOUSE BAND kick up and we

CUT TO:

19 INT. MATT'S OFFICE - NIGHT

19

MATT's putting on a clean shirt and tying a tie as he looks out his window at the audience being seated. SIMON's standing in the office.

SIMON

Man, I don't care if people remember who she is or not, *Meet the Press* with Juliette Lewis is just funny right from the starting gate.

MATT

It's gonna work fine. Unless she gets too many laughs and then we're gonna have a time problem.

SIMON

Well good, this is new. Let's worry about getting too many laughs.

MATT

It's true.

SIMON

Anyway, I wanted to come by and tell you that it really means a lot to Ricky and Ron that you're letting me do some of their stuff tonight.

MATT

It's not bad and you scored with it at dress. Listen, would you recognize Darren Wells if you saw him?

SIMON

The pitcher?

DANNY walks in--

DANNY

The pitcher.

MATT

If we're calling him that. He's 7 and 15 with a 6.26 ERA and one win in his last 8 decisions. He's got a walk-to-strikeout ratio that could only be impressive in t-ball and once tore a rotator cuff drying his hair with a towel.

(CONTINUED)

SIMON

They've been out once.

MATT

You knew?!

SIMON

Yes.

MATT

And you didn't tell me?!

DANNY

He probably thought it would distract you. Obviously he was wrong.

MATT

(to DANNY)

You see the board? The show's done and it's good.

DANNY

I know it's good. And between writing the show and getting a stiletto boot signed at the Roxy, I'm surprised you had time to memorize his pitching stats.

MATT

How did you know about that?

SIMON

A stiletto boot?

DANNY

I miss nothing.

MATT

There he is.

DANNY and SIMON look out the window at the audience...

SIMON

He's big.

MATT

It's not hard to be big.

DANNY

That's right.

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED: (2)

19

MATT

Let's see this guy make the Dean's List 8 semesters in a row as a Contemporary Dramatic Lit major.

SIMON

(re: WELLS)

Fairy.

MATT

And what the hell kind of mind works on a Juliette Lewis impression?

DANNY

Same kind that takes it and puts it in Tim Russert's chair. Let's go start the show.

MATT

Fine.

SIMON

And be careful, would you, because between here and there there might be windows made of glass.

MATT

Yeah.

The three of them walk out as we

CUT TO:

20 INT./EXT. PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

20

The garage is almost empty as JORDAN heads to her car with her arms full of scripts, a briefcase and her purse.

KEVIN appears, about 10 feet behind her, with another armload of scripts for her to take home.

KEVIN

Jordan?

JORDAN

Yeah.

KEVIN

You wanted these too.

JORDAN

Thanks.

(CONTINUED)

KEVIN

Shelly Green's office just called.

JORDAN

God, what now?

KEVIN

Ryan's going on Geraldo.

JORDAN

(beat)

When?

KEVIN

Monday night.

JORDAN

Well sharks gotta swim, bats gotta fly,
I'm gonna get screwed by this man till I
die.

KEVIN

You mind if I ask you something?

JORDAN

What?

KEVIN

Some of the stuff is true, some he's
making up.

JORDAN

Yeah.

KEVIN

So why not at least put out a piece of
paper saying "this one is true, this he
made up, this one is true", why not at
least do that?

JORDAN

'Cause I'd look like an idiot, I'd
prolong the story, I'd take it to a new
level by commenting and mostly I'd help
him sell books.

KEVIN

Well you're taking it well.

JORDAN

Thank you.

(CONTINUED)

KEVIN
Are you going home?

JORDAN
I'm gonna go over to Studio 60 and check
on Martha.

KEVIN
Okay.

JORDAN
Monday?

KEVIN
Yeah, I'll see you Monday.

JORDAN
No, he'll be on Geraldo on Monday? My ex-
husband?

KEVIN
Yeah.

JORDAN
Okay.

JORDAN exits as we

CUT TO:

21 INT. STUDIO 60/STAGE - NIGHT

21

--in mid-show with HARRIET and SIMON at the "News 60" anchor
desk.

SIMON
...dyslexia, hyperlexia, ADD, ADHD, when
I went to school there was just stupid.

A big LAUGH--

SIMON (CONT'D)
"What's wrong with my son?" "Oh him? He's
stupid. Next!"

A big LAUGH...

SIMON (CONT'D)
America's also the most overweight nation
in the world. We've got so much food here
we drop it on people along with bombs.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED:

21

SIMON (CONT'D)

You really want to mess with someone's head? Drop a cruise missile and a couple of tons a Hot Pockets on their ass and see what happens next. I'm Simon Stiles.

HARRIET

(laughing a little)

And I'm Harriet Hayes, that's the news.

APPLAUSE along with the "News 60" theme as we

INTERCUT WITH:

22 INT. CONTROL ROOM - SAME TIME

22

CAL

We're out.

LILLY

90 seconds back.

INTERCUT WITH:

23 INT. STAGE/DANNY'S AREA - SAME TIME

23

DANNY

(into headset--looking at a stopwatch)

I've got us right on it, Cally.

CAL

Yeah, Tom's gonna blow that all to hell with "Dr. Phil" though.

DANNY

You and Matt are both worried about people laughing too much.

CAL

No, I'm worried about they turn off the electricity at ten o'clock. How's Matt likin' it?

DANNY

I don't know, he's wandering around.

CAL

Why?

DANNY

He's in love.

(CONTINUED)

CAL
Okay. 30 back.

CUT TO:

23A INT. BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

23A

RICKY and RON are watching the monitor as SIMON comes along.

SIMON
Ricky. Ron.

RICKY
Hey.

RON
Good show so far.

SIMON
Your stuff in the news killed. I wanted
to say nice job.

RICKY
Thank you.

RON
Thanks.

RICKY
You think you could mention to Matt that
you liked it?

SIMON
Well...it's not gonna matter to Matt if I
liked it, only if he liked it.

RICKY
We should be overseeing the news.

SIMON
One show at a time. I thought it was a
pretty big step that he gave you 90
seconds.

RICKY
We're used to *running* the show. 90
seconds isn't a big step for us.

SIMON
I meant it was a big step for him.
Anyway...90 seconds is enough to feel
pride of authorship. Thanks.

(CONTINUED)

23A CONTINUED:

23A

SIMON heads off.

CUT TO:

24 INT. STUDIO 60 LOBBY - NIGHT

24

MATT's just standing in the lobby, listening to the show on a headset.

JORDAN comes in--

JORDAN
What are you doing?

MATT
I'm listening.

JORDAN
You're not watching?

MATT
I'm listening.

JORDAN
Why?

MATT
'Cause if I don't attach the voice to the face then--it doesn't matter.

JORDAN
Okay, I didn't care anyway.

JORDAN heads upstairs and we

CUT TO:

25 INT. STAGE - NIGHT

25

The GUEST HOST (TO BE DETERMINED) is out on stage with the FULL CAST for the good-nights as the FLOOR MANAGER counts him in--

FLOOR MANAGER
Five, four--

--then silently counting them down "three, two, one" and motioning--

GUEST HOST
(over APPLAUSE)
Thank you so much, I've had the time of my life.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED:

25

GUEST HOST (CONT'D)

Thanks to the cast and crew, thank you
Joss Stone, thank you Matt Albie and Danny
Tripp. Drive safe, goodnight.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

26 INT. DANNY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

26

The HOUSE BAND's still playing as we see the END CREDITS ROLL on a monitor. MARTHA's at her laptop staring at something on the Internet.

DANNY comes in, the adrenaline still flowing from the show--

DANNY

That's how we do it downtown, baby.

(beat)

Do me a favor, don't write down the 'baby', that just came out.

MARTHA

Look, I can't get involved in my own story but you need to see this. I was surfing the net--

DANNY

You need full access to surf the--

MARTHA

--listen to me--to get real time reaction to the show and this was posted a few minutes after "News 60" came down. It looks like a home movie of a comic at a club called The Laugh Factory and there's a date stamp--it was taken almost a year ago.

MARTHA hits a button on her laptop and shows DANNY the video--

INTERCUT WITH:

27 INT. LAUGH FACTORY (ON LAPTOP)

27

STAND-UP

At schools today, kids are diagnosed with stuff like dyslexia, hyperlexia, ADD, ADHD...In my day you were just stupid. "What's wrong with my son?" "Oh him? He's stupid. Next!"

We see DANNY's face start to turn ashen...

STAND-UP (CONT'D)

America's the most overweight nation in the world. We've got so much food here we're dropping it on people along with the bombs. If you really want to mess with somebody's head--

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED:

27

The tape video keeps playing as DANNY grabs the phone, hits two numbers, then--

DANNY

(into phone)

It's Danny. Let the audience go but nobody else leaves the building. I need Jordan McDeere, I need Legal, I need the Broadcast Center. We've got a problem.

28 INT. STAGE/BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

28

The HOUSE BAND is still playing and the AUDIENCE is exiting the theatre as we see MATT, very determined, weaving among crew members who are striking the set and cameras, returning sentiments of "Good show", "Way to go", "Nice job".

He passes TOM backstage--

TOM

Good show.

MATT

Good show, man.

TOM

Whoa, whoa, whoa, where ya goin'?

MATT

(beat)

What?

TOM

Where are you going?

MATT

(pause--then screw it)

I'm going--

TOM

I knew it.

MATT

I'm going--

TOM

Matt--

MATT

I'm going to her dressing room and I'm stamping her down.

(CONTINUED)

TOM

Why?

MATT

'Cause one of The Pussycat Dolls gave me
some very good advice.

TOM

I dare you to say that sentence again.

MATT

Hey, if The Pussycat Dolls know anything it's--

TOM

Dancing!

MATT

--romance.

PA

Matt, they're telling me they need you
upstairs.

MATT

In a minute.

TOM

Listen to me. The show just came down,
you're full of adrenaline, you just
watched her perform and it's your most
vulnerable time.

MATT

Maybe so.

TOM

Well don't you think she knows that? This is
like a Free Strindberg Festival in the Park!

MATT

It has nothing to do with Strindberg!

TOM

When Paula and I broke up--

MATT

Tommy, you and Paula broke up because she
never saw you. We never leave here.

TOM

That's not true. Friday night was always
date night.

(CONTINUED)

MATT

Friday night is show night.

TOM

And we'd have date night at the wrap party.

MATT

She's a *doctor*! She went to college for 10 years, she doesn't want to compete for your time with the girls of Delta Gamma.

PA #2

Excuse me, sir, they're asking for you upstairs.

MATT

I'll be up in a minute.

TOM starts following MATT down--

29 INT. STAIRS - CONTINUOUS

29

TOM

Matty, aside from all that, you're her boss.

MATT

Yeah, you know I was thinkin' about that too and that's just ridiculous.

TOM

It's not.

MATT

What about the other couples in show business who--Vincente Minelli and Judy Garland. Arthur Miller and Marilyn Monroe.

TOM

Things worked out well for those guys.

MATT

The Carpenters.

TOM

Siblings, but again, she's dead.

MATT

If Harriet dies I can live with that. What I can't live with is--

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED:

29

They've come down into--

30 INT. BASEMENT CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

30

--and MATT stops in his tracks 'cause he sees it. DARREN WELLS is standing at HARRIET's open dressing room door, holding her in his hands and kissing her.

A few network PUBLICITY PEOPLE, including ANTONIA, are around--

ANTONIA

Harry, can we get a picture of you two?

HARRIET, who was taken by surprise by the kiss in the first place, is a little disoriented--

HARRIET

Well--wait, hang on--

ANTONIA

We can use it or not use it.

DARREN

It's up to you.

MATT turns to go, but in turning has knocked over a stack of metal light stands and they come crashing down. HARRIET turns to see MATT--

HARRIET

Matthew--

MATT

No, I was just--

SUZANNE has been standing by with her hand to her ear, listening to an instruction over her radio.

SUZANNE

Matt.

MATT

(calling out)

I'm sorry, am I allowed to pick this up, or does it have to be a union--

SUZANNE

(to MATT--it's important)

Sir?

MATT

--a union grip or something.

(CONTINUED)

SUZANNE

They need you upstairs, something's--

HARRIET

Hang on, this is--

MATT

(to HARRIET and DARREN)

No, yeah, I just came downstairs to say great show. Darren, I'm Matt Albie, I'm a big fan. I saw you pitch against the Mets in July, they couldn't touch you.

DARREN

That was a good game.

MATT

Yeah.

SUZANNE

Matt--

DARREN

Man you made me laugh tonight.

MATT

Yeah, no, it was them.

HARRIET

It was him.

SUZANNE

Something's happened, Matt.

MATT

(beat--finally)

What?

SUZANNE

Danny needs you upstairs right now.
Something's happened.

MATT

Excuse me.

MATT takes off and HARRIET stands there...looking at TOM.

31 INT. DANNY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

31

JORDAN and CAL, along with LILLY, have joined DANNY and MARTHA and are looking at the video on the laptop.

(CONTINUED)

STAND-UP (OS ON LAPTOP)

You really want to mess with someone's head, drop a cruise missile and a couple of tons of hot pockets on their ass.

JORDAN

How did it happen?

DANNY

I don't know, it was material that came from the room.

JORDAN

What do you want to do?

DANNY

Whatever Matt tells us to do.

JORDAN

Well I want to--

DANNY

Whatever he tells us to do, Jordan. This is *his*--accusing a writer of plagiarism--

JORDAN

You just said it wasn't him, it was--

DANNY

It doesn't matter if it's true or not--Martha?

MARTHA

You might as well accuse him of being a sex offender.

DANNY

An immediate press release worded however he wants, an apology, whatever he tells us to do. Including, Cal, we're gonna have to--

CAL

Yeah.

DANNY

--break into the West Coast tape delay and do a re-written "News 60" again live.

JORDAN

The whole thing?

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED: (2)

31

CAL

Yeah, I can't CGI Simon and Harriet into the middle of a taped segment. They've gotta do the whole thing again at--

(to LILLY)
--what?

LILLY

Zero-zero-thirteen, I think.

MATT comes in--

MATT

What's going on?

DANNY

Alright, listen. Do you know a stand-up named Lenny Gold?

MATT

No.

DANNY

The 90 seconds from Ricky and Ron? In "News 60"? There's video on the Internet of this guy doing it almost verbatim at The Laugh Factory almost a year ago. It looks like an open-mic night or something, I don't--

MATT grabs a thick, heavy book off the desk and slams it back down.

DANNY (CONT'D)

We'll break into the tape and do "News 60" live again.

MATT

We need to get this guy on the phone. If he's anywhere near here, we're gonna invite him to come down and do it on camera himself.

DANNY

The interns are already on the phones.

MATT

He should be easy to find 'cause there probably aren't that many Lenny Golds in the Los Angeles area.

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED: (3)

31

DANNY

If we can't find him--

MATT

I'll write another 90 seconds, but the first 30 are gonna be an explanation and an apology.

DANNY

Sure.

JORDAN

We're also trying to get Legal on the phone and I think maybe we should wait for them.

MATT

We're not waiting for anything, and when you get legal, ask 'em what they think the settlement's gonna be in the copyright infringement suit we're all about to be named defendants in.

LILLY

What about the audience?

DANNY

What about 'em?

LILLY

There isn't gonna be one.

DANNY

(to MATT)

It's a 4:50 segment, it's gonna be pretty dry.

CAL

I can laugh it.

MATT

We're not using the box.

DANNY

(emptying his wallet)

Alright, Lilly? Here's what you do. Get everybody who's not doing something and send 'em out on the street with 20 dollar bills.

Everybody starts taking out all the cash they've got and throwing down on the desk--

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED: (4)

31

CAL

We only need to fill the center section.

DANNY

(to MATT)

You go start writing now.

MATT

Someone needs to tell Simon.

DANNY

I'll do it.

MATT

You better bring a couple a guys to tie him down first.

MATT exits into his office--

DANNY

(to LILLY)

Go.

CAL

I've gotta get on the phone with the broadcast center in New Jersey.

JORDAN

Our broadcast center is in New Jersey?

DANNY

It's confidence inspiring that the president of the network doesn't know that.

JORDAN

I'm new.

DANNY

Bayonne, New Jersey. They send it to a satellite--which you keep in outer space.

JORDAN

Hey!

DANNY

(to CAL)

The seven second delay.

CAL

Yeah.

(CONTINUED)

DANNY

How does the math work, we add seven seconds?

CAL

We *subtract* seven seconds.

DANNY

We add it.

CAL

We subtract it.

DANNY

The taped broadcast happens seven seconds later in the West than it did live in the East.

CAL

That's why you subtract seven seconds.

DANNY

You don't add it?

JORDAN

Oh and this has me bathed in confidence.

DANNY

We're fine. I'm gonna go have a conversation with Ricky and Ron.

DANNY exits...JORDAN and CAL are left alone...

JORDAN

This is gonna work?

CAL

Sure.

JORDAN

You've done it before?

CAL

A hundred times. Well, really, no. Never. But I can't think of what the problem would be.

JORDAN

Sure, what could possibly go wrong?

CAL

There you go.

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED: (6)

31

CAL exits and we

CUT TO:

32 INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT

32

As DANNY comes from one end, RICKY and RON are walking toward him from the other.

RICKY

We just heard. We're going to talk to
Matt and we want you to know that--

BAM!--as soon as DANNY reaches them he throws RON against the wall--

DANNY

What the hell happened?!

RICKY

Hey!

DANNY

Who was it, Ricky?! I know it wasn't the
two of you who handed that up.

RICKY

It was the room and we take
responsibility.

DANNY

16 writers don't get together and
collectively rip somebody off, who was
it?

RICKY

I'm not--

DANNY

Ricky--

RICKY

I'm not gonna tell you, Danny.

DANNY

You are gonna tell me 'cause I want
somebody's ass on my desk--

(quieter)

--and if I find out they did it on
purpose to screw with Matt I'm gonna get
a lot more than that.

(CONTINUED)

32 CONTINUED:

32

RICKY

They didn't do it on purpose, there's no way.

DANNY

Who was it, Ron?

RON

I'm sorry, Danny, I'm not gonna tell you.

RICKY

We're taking full responsibility and we'll resign if you want.

DANNY

(pause)

Lilly's collecting cash to go out and buy an audience. See if you can help her.

RON

Yeah.

DANNY moves on as we

CUT TO:

33 OMITTED

33

33A INT. HAIR AND MAKE-UP - NIGHT

33A

MATT and SIMON.

SIMON

Just gimme a name.

MATT

Simon--

SIMON

A description.

MATT

It doesn't matter, it was my fault.

SIMON

(pause)

How are we doing this?

MATT

After "Meet the Press", we have a two-twenty c-break and then we'll come back and punch in "News 60" live.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

33A CONTINUED:

33A

MATT (CONT'D)

There'll be an explanation and an apology
at the top, and then we go into our
jokes.

SIMON

Alright.

MATT

Alright.

SIMON

We need to be able to prove it's live.

MATT

(calling out to MAISY, who's
passing)

Maisy!

(to SIMON)

A sports score.

MAISY

Yeah.

MATT

Get someone to stay on top of a game, any
game, and Simon'll give the current
score.

MAISY

It's gonna be after midnight in the West
and after 3AM in the East, is anybody
playing anything?

MATT

Somewhere in the world, there is a
sporting event underway. Have somebody
stay on top of the score.

MAISY exits--

SIMON

I bussed tables at Hamburger Hamlet till
eleven then worked six clubs a night for
ten dollars a set and a free drink. In my
life I never stole a joke.

MATT

You didn't tonight either. I did.

MATT heads out into--

33B INT. BACKSTAGE CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

33B

--where HARRIET sees MATT.

HARRIET

Matt?

MATT

I gotta go to my office.

HARRIET

That was awful what happened before. It took me by surprise too. I just opened the door and he kissed me.

MATT

Yeah, I was gonna rush in to help when I saw you struggling to break free.

HARRIET

Can you stop walking?

MATT

I'm kind of in the middle of something here.

HARRIET

You said--

MATT

Date the Los Angeles Lakers, Harry, I don't care right now.

HARRIET

I understand.

MATT disappears.

PA (VO)

Harriet and Simon to stage please.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

34 INT. STAGE - NIGHT

34

HERB (FROM TV)
If it's Sunday, it's *Meet the Press* with
Juliette Lewis.

HARRIET, as Juliette Lewis, is at the desk with DYLAN as
Donald Rumsfeld and JEANNIE as Hillary Clinton.

HARRIET (FROM TV)
(as JULIETTE LEWIS)
That's our floor manager, Nadine. Hi
Nadine. This morning my guests are
Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and the
Democratic junior senator from New York,
Hillary Rodham Clinton.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

We are watching the West Coast feed on a monitor. All the
seats in the audience are oddly empty as we see cameras being
prepared at the News 60 desk.

HARRIET (FROM TV) (CONT'D)
Welcome Secretary Rumsfeld, Senator
Clinton. You guys must really hate each
other.

SIMON is sitting at the News 60 desk, waiting quietly.

CUT TO:

34A INT. STAGE/DANNY'S AREA - SAME TIME

34A

DANNY is standing with MARTHA.

MARTHA
How does something like this happen?

DANNY
It doesn't usually. I hope you've noted
that we're taking all the steps we can
think of to correct it.

MARTHA
I've noted that.

(CONTINUED)

DANNY

Can you think of anything we're not doing?

MARTHA

No.

DANNY

Then note that too.

MARTHA

Hey I don't work for you, I'll note what I want.

DANNY

Note it!

MARTHA

I'm noting it, I'm noting it.

DANNY

(beat)

But I don't see you--

MARTHA

It's in my head.

DANNY

Okay.

MARTHA

So how does something like this happen?

DANNY

Matt didn't start in TV so he has a harder time writing with a group. I told him last week I wanted him to start getting the other writers into the game. Rick Tahoe and Ron Oswald are the co-execs in charge of the room and they gave him this material and Matt did what I told him to do.

MARTHA

That seems reasonable.

DANNY

Well write down that it's reasonable.

MARTHA

How 'bout if you write the piece and I just put my name on it?

(CONTINUED)

DANNY

Are you allowed to do that?

MARTHA

No.

DANNY

So you were just mocking me then.

MARTHA

Yeah.

HARRIET comes by--

DANNY

Harry?

HARRIET

Yeah.

DANNY

Siddown next to him and calm him down,
would you? There's no point in doing this
if he's gonna eat the desk on camera.

HARRIET

Yeah.

DANNY

And Harry?

HARRIET

Sir?

DANNY

I think Matt's psycho-obsession with you
is problematic for us enough without your
making out with baseball players in front
of him.

HARRIET

I was just as surprised as--

DANNY

Harry?

DANNY gives her a look that says fun's fun but I'm not
screwing around.

(CONTINUED)

34A CONTINUED: (3)

34A

DANNY (CONT'D)
Go to the desk.

CUT TO:

34B INT. STAGE - NIGHT

34B

HARRIET goes and sits down at the News 60 desk, where SIMON is already seated.

HARRIET
You know where I grew up, if this had happened? There'd be a town meeting and everybody'd be there. And the guy would have to sit and listen while Rev. Tillinghouse gave a sermon on honesty and character.

SIMON
That's exactly what would have happened where I grew up, except we would've driven by the guy's house and shot him with a "Gat" 9.

HARRIET
See, there's more that unites us than divides us. Oh good, our audience is here.

SIMON
This isn't happening.

And PAGES begin leading this bizarre group to their seats. There's a clump of people in full regalia who've just come from some kind of Goth party, some hookers, some homeless, a few drunken marines on leave from Pendleton, a few incredibly white tourists from Scottsdale, etc.

CUT TO:

35 INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

35

JORDAN is standing in back, watching the audience come in on a monitor.

CAL
Okay, we're two minutes out.

JORDAN
The guys in the red bandanas, are they Crips?

(CONTINUED)

35 CONTINUED:

35

CAL

No, red bandanas mean they're Bloods.

JORDAN

Okay, are we insured for any of this?

CAL

I don't know, but I wouldn't think so.

(into headset)

Suzanne, we've gotta move the woman in the fishnet top, she's not wearing anything underneath.

JORDAN

Oh dear God.

CUT TO:

36 OMITTED

36

36A INT. OUTSIDE MATT'S OFFICE- NIGHT

36A

MATT comes out of his office with pages as MAISY joins him--

MATT

They're just gonna have hard copies at the desk, there isn't time for cards.

MAISY

Got it.

MATT

You got a game someplace?

MAISY

A cricket match in Bangalore.

MATT

Well...why not.

MATT starts scribbling it in to the copy and we

CUT TO:

37 INT. STAGE - NIGHT

37

As pages are being brought to HARRIET and SIMON at the desk and they get final touch-ups.

CUT TO:

38 INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

38

MARYLYN, in pajamas, is in bed with a book and her glasses. She hits a button on a remote that raises a plasma TV from a console as JACK calls from the bathroom--

JACK (OS)
Marylyn?

MARYLYN
Yeah.

JACK sticks his head out of the bathroom.

JACK
I picked up something today that I think
might please you.

MARYLYN
What can there possibly be that we don't
already have?

She's turned on the TV and we're in commercial as we

CUT TO:

39 INT. STAGE - NIGHT

39

The AUDIENCE all has deli-wrapped sandwiches and coffee.

DANNY
(calling out)
Alright, here we go! Just like we did it
three hours ago only...you know...legal.

FLOOR MANAGER
In 5, 4--

--counts them in silently, "Three, Two"--

And we HEAR and SEE the "News 60" MUSIC and ANIMATION. The
FLOOR MANAGER points to SIMON, who reads from his pages.

SIMON
I'm Simon Stiles.

HARRIET
I'm Harriet Hayes.

(CONTINUED)

39 CONTINUED:

39

SIMON

We are *live* right now on the West Coast.
We have cut into the tape delayed feed of
the program that began its broadcast
three hours and forty-three minutes ago
in the East.

CUT TO:

40 INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

40

JACK comes out wearing satin pajamas from the Hugh Hefner
collection as MARYLYN watches what's happening on the screen.

JACK

No TV tonight. Tonight I concentrate
entirely on--what the hell is going on?

MARYLYN

I think they've broken into the West
Coast delay.

SIMON (ON TV)

If you don't believe me, I can prove it.
At this moment...

(not believing what he's about
to read)

...at this moment in Bangalore, the Royal
Melbourne Institute of Technology is
playing the Bangalore Union Cricket Club
in the LG ICC Test Match. Bangalore is up
240 runs with one wicket lost in the
first inning.

JACK grabs the phone and begins frantically dialing--

MARYLYN

The pajamas are nice, though.

CUT TO:

41 INT. STAGE - NIGHT

41

SIMON

(continuing)

...it was material that was written by
and has been performed by an obviously
talented writer/comedian named Lenny
Gold. Our mistake was inadvertent and
deeply regrettable.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED:

41

SIMON (CONT'D)

We hope he accepts our apology and we hope you continue to be viewers of our show. So here now, the news.

CUT TO:

42 INT. MATT'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

42

The joke part of "News 60" plays on the monitor. MATT watches out the window as RICKY and RON tap on the door. MATT turns around.

RICKY

The guy hadn't gotten anything on the air in a long time and was scared for his job. We both talked to him and in no uncertain terms. He screwed up huge and he knows it. But I'm not gonna end his career over it. 'Cause I know how he feels. And that's why we misled you and told you it was written by the room. People aren't even going for funny anymore, Matt, they're just trying for your respect. Anyway, we told Danny, we'll step down if you want but we're not giving him up.

MATT takes a drag on his cigarette, blows out the smoke and stubs out the butt in an ashtray...

MATT

Well now you've got my respect.

MAISY comes in a little out of breath--

MAISY

Matt?

MATT

Yeah.

MAISY

It wasn't him.

MATT

What do you mean?

MAISY

We found Lenny Gold, the right Lenny Gold, and we asked if he wanted to come over and do it on the air himself, and he said he can't 'cause he stole it too.

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED:

42

MATT

(beat)
What?!

RICKY

What?

MAISY

He says the guy who wrote it wrote it
nine years ago and his name is Benjamin
Barkley.

MATT picks up the phone and hits two numbers as we

RON

Does that name sound familiar? Benjamin
Barkley?

CUT TO:

43 INT. STAGE - SAME TIME

43

"News 60" continues as DANNY sees the flashing red light on
his phone.

DANNY

(quietly into phone)
Yeah.

DANNY listens, doesn't believe what he's hearing, and turns up
to look at MATT in his window...

SIMON

I'm Simon Stiles.

HARRIET

I'm Harriet Hayes, that's the news.

FLOOR MANAGER

And we're out.

DANNY

Hang on! We're gonna bust in again after
this C-break.

SIMON

Why?

DANNY

Just a second.

(CONTINUED)

43 CONTINUED:

43

DANNY hits a couple of numbers as we

CUT TO:

44 INT. CONTROL ROOM - SAME TIME

44

CAL picks up--

JORDAN

Alright, that worked. That was a nice piece of broadcasting. That was great, that was smooth sailing.

CAL

(hanging up)

Yeah, we're goin' again.

JORDAN

Why?!

CAL

We attributed the material to the wrong guy, but the problem is this'll throw our time off a little so we're gonna have to paste and fill as we go now. I'd get comfortable.

JORDAN just sits down on the floor--

JORDAN

When the phone rings it's gonna be for me.

CUT TO:

45 INT. STAGE - NIGHT

45

MATT comes down the spiral stairs and onto the floor as DANNY huddles at the "News 60" desk.

DANNY

We're gonna go from this to "Swamp Donkey" so you'll have time to make the change for "Monster Trucks."

TOM

Somebody'll tell us when the show is over, right?

DANNY

Yeah.

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED:

45

MATT

(done)

Okay.

FLOOR MANAGER

Places.

MATT and DANNY step away--

MATT

It looks like there are bench warrants
out for half our audience.

DANNY

No, they're good people. They like to
laugh.

CUT TO:

46 INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

46

JACK's got the phone to his ear--

JACK

(into phone)

Find her. Get her. Get her now.

SIMON (ON TV)

We're back, and we're back live again on
the West Coast. I don't have a cricket
update so I'll ask you to take my word
for it. The reason we're still live is
that we mis-attributed the plagiarized
material we performed earlier to Lenny
Gold. It turns out the actual author is--

JACK

No no no no no no no--

CUT TO:

47 INT. CONTROL ROOM - SAME TIME

47

SUZANNE's holding out a wall phone--

SUZANNE

Ms. McDeere?

JORDAN

Yeah.

(CONTINUED)

47 CONTINUED:

47

SUZANNE

Jack Rudolph.

JORDAN

My boyfriend's calling me.

(taking the phone)

Hey Jack.

INTERCUT WITH:

48 INT. JACK'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

48

JACK

(into phone)

WHAT IN HELL IS GOING ON OVER THERE?!

JORDAN

It's all under control. Plus, if you had any money on the Bangalore Union Cricket Club then it's your lucky day.

CUT TO:

49 INT. STAGE - NIGHT

49

SIMON

And we now return you to our show, which, if we've timed this right, should be an amusing 60 second cartoon. If we haven't timed it right it will be a color-focus pattern.

FLOOR MANAGER

Out.

DANNY

Yeah. Alright.

RICKY and RON rush over to MATT and DANNY with some pages--

RICKY

It's ours. We own it. Benjamin Barkley.
Ben Barkley.

RON

Benny.

DANNY

He worked *here*.

MATT

Before us.

(CONTINUED)

49 CONTINUED:

49

RICKY

One season. '91. And that's when he wrote it. Look at the stamp.

RON

We own it.

RICKY

And he wrote it when he was here, look at the stamp.

DANNY

We own the copyright.

There's a long silence as they all look at each other...then DANNY looks at SIMON--

SIMON

No.

DANNY

Yeah, just one more time.

(to SUZANNE)

Gimme Cal, get Jordan a drink and send Jack Rudolph a nice thing of balloons.

SIMON

Matt? Anything in particular you want me to say to anyone who might still be left watching?

FLOOR MANAGER

20 back.

MATT and HARRIET look at each other and MATT scribbles something down and tosses the pad to SIMON.

SIMON

(reading what MATT has written)

This is not the comedy we intended to do when the week began.

FLOOR MANAGER

In 10--

BLACKOUTEND OF SHOW